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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
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Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
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FOR EUR AND IC, ALSO PASS AMBASSADOR RABB

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PORG, IT, US, AR
SUBJECT: ITALY AND THE DESAPARECIDOS: THE "FARNESINA"
GETS THE THIRD DEGREE

REFS: A) ROME 24674, B) ROME 24575, C) BUENOS AIRES 6297

1. [REDACTED] SUMMARY: ITALIAN MEDIA CONTINUE TO GIVE
HEAVY, FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE TO THE FARNESINA'S
(DOMESTIC NICKNAME FOR THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS) ALLEGED ROLE IN WITHHOLDING INFORMATION
ON ITALO-ARGENTINE DESAPARECIDOS FROM CONCERNED
PUBLIC. THE ROME PROSECUTOR HAS SUMMONED CERTAIN
DIPLOMATS FOR QUESTIONING. AS USUAL, THERE IS A
STRONG ELEMENT OF DOMESTIC POLITICS IN THE CURRENT
ISSUE, BUT NO ONE'S HANDS SEEM ENTIRELY CLEAN.
END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE FARNESINA'S ROLE IN THE DESAPARECIDOS
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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SCANDAL HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF INTENSE MEDIA
CONCERN, WITH A NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS -- NOTABLY THE

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LEFT-OF-CENTER DAILY "LA REPUBBLICA" -- CONTINUING
TO ACCUSE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT OF

- (A) FAILURE TO FOLLOW-UP WITH GOA REQUESTS
- FOR INFORMATION FROM INVOLVED ITALO-
- ARGENTINE FAMILIES AND;

- (B) WITHHOLDING INFORMATION FROM THE ITALIAN
- PUBLIC REGARDING MASSACRES AND MASS GRAVES

(WE NOTE THAT THIS CONTRADICTS ITALIAN PRESS REPORTS
AS CARRIED IN REF C PARA 1 TO THE EFFECT THAT GOI
DID REPEATEDLY SEEK CLARIFICATION FROM THE ARGENTINES
ON THE STATUS OF THE MISSING).

3. (U) THE COMMUNIST DAILY "L'UNITA" RECALLS THAT
ON AT LEAST TWO PREVIOUS OCCASIONS -- THE FIRST
GOING BACK TO 1976 -- ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS
QUERIED GOI ON THE DESARARECIDOS AND GOT BACK
UNSATISFACTORY REPLIES. A NUMBER OF OTHER PAPERS
ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM CARRY HUMAN-INTEREST
STORIES ON SPECIFIC FAMILY CASES, NOTABLY THAT OF
CRISTINA MIURA, WIFE OF ONE OF THE MISSING. FINALLY,
THE INFLUENTIAL CENTRIST DAILY "CORRIERE DELLA SERA"
QUESTIONS HOW LONG GOA CAN TRY TO HOODWINK WORLD
OPINION, AND REPRIMANDS GOI FOR INEFFICIENT HANDLING
OF THE MATTER.

4. (U) THE ROME MAGISTRATE HAS SUMMONED A NUMBER
OF ITALIAN DIPLOMATS FOR QUESTIONING, NOTABLY THOSE
WHO WERE ON ASSIGNMENT IN BUENOS AIRES WHEN
QUESTIONING ON THE DESAPARECIDOS CAME UP. HE HAS
BASED HIS SUMMONS ON A SECTION IN ITALIAN PENAL LAW
THAT LABELS POLITICAL PERSECUTION AGAINST ITALIANS

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ABROAD A CRIME. NO SPECIFIC NAMES HAVE YET COME
FORTH, BUT FORMER AMBASSADOR CARRARA (NOW RETIRED)
IS APPARENTLY HIGH ON A LIST OF THOSE WHOSE SILENCE
IS TERMED "UNACCEPTABLE" BY MANY.

5. [REDACTED] THERE IS A DOMESTIC POLITICAL STINK
TO ALL THIS THROUGH WHICH WAFTS BOTH THE ODOR OF
THE P-2 (MASONIC LODGE) SCANDAL AND THAT OF
POLITICAL RIVALRY. APPARENTLY, THE FORMER
HEAD OF THE ARGENTINE NAVY, ADMIRAL MASSERA (NOW
REPORTEDLY UNDER HOUSE ARREST) DISCUSSED THE DES-
APARECIDOS QUESTION WITH P-2 FUGITIVE GELLI.
FURTHERMORE, ONE OF THE FARNESINA UNDER SECRETARIES

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IN 1976, WHO ALLEGEDLY FAILED TO ACT, IS ON THE INFAMOUS P-2 LIST. THERE EXISTS THUS A WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT P-2, FOR THE FINANCIAL INTERESTS OF SOME OF ITS MEMBERS, WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN GETTING GOI TO HUSH-UP THE MATTER. IN CONCLUSION WE NOTE THAT A CURRENT FARNESINA UNDER SECRETARY, THE LIBERAL RAFFAELE COSTA, IS DIRECTLY ACCUSED BY THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMISSION, THE COMMUNIST PIERELLI, OF TEPIDITY IN DEALING WITH GOA ON THE DESAPARECIDOS.

6. [REDACTED] ON THE OTHER HAND, QUESTIONS COULD FAIRLY BE ASKED OF ALL THOSE PARTIES, INCLUDING THE SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS, WHO SUPPORTED ITALY'S BREAK WITH THE EC OVER SANCTIONS AND FAILED TO SEEK A QUID PRO QUO IN THE FORM OF INFORMATION ON THE MISSING ITALO-ARGENTINIANS. FURTHERMORE, THERE IS THE LONG-PENDING MATTER OF GRANTING THE VOTE TO ITALIAN CITIZENS ABROAD. IF THE BILL NOW IN PARLIAMENT PASSES, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC), ACCORDING TO MOST STATISTICS, WOULD MOST STAND TO BENEFIT AS REGARDS THE SIZEABLE NUMBER OF ITALIAN VOTERS IN ARGENTINA. WHETHER

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THERE IS SUBSTANCE TO THE RUMORS -- WHICH WOULD DOUBTLESS DELIGHT THE DC'S ENEMIES -- MAY COME TO LIGHT DURING THE FORTHCOMING EXAMINING MAGISTRATE'S GRILLING.

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7. [REDACTED] COMMENT: WHILE LESS THAN THE P-2 CRISIS, THE DES-
APARECIDOS BUSINESS IS BECOMING MORE THAN
SIMPLY ANOTHER DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCANDAL. OUR
MFA CONTACTS TEND TO POO-POO THE MATTER, BUT IF
IT TURNS OUT THAT INFORMATION WAS IN FACT WITHHELD,
OR THAT GOI FAILED TO ACT ON SPECIFIC REQUESTS, A
HEAD OR TWO MIGHT ROLL. SHOULD ITALIAN DIPLOMATIC
ARCHIVES REVEAL THAT DEMARCHES TO GOA WERE TIMELY
AND REASONABLY FORCEFUL, THINGS WILL BLOW OVER
QUICKLY. IF NOT, THE USUALLY DISCREET WORLD OF
ITALIAN DIPLOMACY MAY BE IN FOR A LOT MORE UNWANTED
PUBLICITY. BURIED BANK ACCOUNTS ARE ONE THING,
BURIED BODIES ARE ANOTHER.

BRIDGES

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